

require explicit biblical and theological resourcing in contemporary England, not to mention the rest of the United Kingdom.

This book is strongest when making its argument about freedom and order, especially for the period before the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century. What it does not do is show enough about the role of the Bible in modern civil society. Nevertheless, it is splendidly readable, and is to be commended for avoiding the antiquarian and nostalgic approach that has been lavished upon the King James Bible in this, its anniversary year.

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Advocacy and Exodus: From Moses to the Mental Health Act, George Gammack, London: Spiderwise, 2011, pp. xi + 420, ISBN 978-1908128195. £10.99

In the popular mind the term ‘advocacy’ is primarily associated with what is practised in the courts by advocates or barristers. For Christians, of course, the term ‘advocate’ has its Trinitarian reference. In recent years, however, advocacy in the sense of giving a voice to the voiceless, of speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves, has come to be recognised as a legitimate and necessary activity in society in general. Thus the art and exercise of independent advocacy has gained recognition and increased in scope. Indeed, its recent incorporation in mental health legislation in Scotland and England has further attracted attention. Its nature, range and opportunities as well as its risks and handicaps are here exposed and exploited in a most interesting and well-informed manner by George Gammack, social worker, minister of the Church of Scotland, and professional advocate.

What is interesting and unique in his approach is that he has, as he says, ‘taken the character of Moses and the biblical story of advocacy for the people in their liberation from Egypt, along with the New Testament promise of the Holy Spirit, the advocate as helper and



friend, and related these to events in contemporary life where advocacy is a powerful and growing imperative' (3). As the title indicates, a main focus of this study is on mental health and its treatment, but he also shows that the scope and importance of advocacy goes far beyond this area.

For Gammack, the great biblical theme of Exodus, with Moses as the imaginative, prophetic advocate, is the freedom journey from oppression and slavery to the formation of a new kind of community. His account of Moses and his role and of the Exodus journey is fascinating, leaning heavily but not exclusively on the work of Walter Brueggemann. So is his demonstration of how the great Exodus theme floods into the New Testament, and here he employs the resources of liberation theology without, however, being blind to its shortcomings. This is truly practical, rather than dogmatic, theology, and its importance here is in providing insight and incentive for liberation today, particularly for those suffering from mental disorder.

Gammack is at great pains to expose 'the power of institutional forces that oppress people, intensify their suffering, deny them citizenship and render them non-persons' (191); and he has no hesitation in condemning 'the bio-chemical bending game' and, too often, 'the psychiatric system'. Here the task of the advocate is detailed in all its complexity – and urgency.

Gammack writes in lively fashion, illustrating copiously and pertinently from his own extensive experience as well as from a wide-ranging body of resources – biblical, theological, philosophical, and literary, as well as works specifically on advocacy. His writing is free from the jargon which so often bedevils these last. His is a rather attractive blend of compassion for those who have been rendered 'non-persons' by having decision-making taken from them by someone else (e.g. the psychiatrist) who knows 'what is best', and indignation at the institution and authorities that foster this situation. As far as mental health is concerned, he examines the existing legislation and points out loopholes in the role given to advocates for patients. He also shows how the need for advocacy goes well beyond the sphere of mental disorder and indeed pervades the whole of life – 'advocacy for all'. He is not blind to the dangers of advocacy, not least of false advocates – 'the wolf in sheep's clothing' – and nor is he blind to the

‘wilderness experience’ of the advocate. In other words, in addition to its ‘Exodus’ theme, this is an comprehensive guide to advocacy today.

Apart from its importance in this area of advocacy in mental health, this reader could not help feeling that many of the insights here and many of the illustrations would be of enormous help to anyone in a situation of having to speak for or stand up for another, which obviously includes the preacher and pastor. Incidentally, given the normal price of theological books these days, this one is remarkably good value.

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